WEIGHTS AND MEASURES BILL.

Mr. Rajaram Row.—I beg to apply for leave to introduce a Bill to regulate the weights and measures in use in this country. That weights and measures vary in different parts of the country, that they are not fixed with reference to particular common standards, that petty merchants and dealers commit frauds upon the ignorant and poor, and that prosecutions for offences relating to weights and measures fail simply for want of a satisfactory basis, are facts generally known. In the first place, there are measures of capacity, then there are the measures of length, and lastly there are the weights used for various purposes. Taking the first, especially the grain measures, which enter so largely into private transactions and Government accounts, the whole country may be divided into two sections with reference to the nomenclature adopted for them. In Shencottah and in South Travancore, including Nanjinaud and the Edanaud Taluks of Kalculam, Eraniel and Vilavancod, the measures in use are *Kotah*, *Marakal* and *Padi*. The other parts of the country have the *Para*, *Edangazhi*, or *Changazhi* as it is known in some places, and the *Nazhi*. The *Para* is the measure adopted for Government calculations. The Kotah itself is different in different parts. In Shencottah, the Kotah is equal to 13 or nearly 14 paras. In Nanjinaud, it is 8·4 paras, and in Kalculam and Eraniel it is three-fourths of the Nanjinaud kotah, and coming further down to Vilavancod, the kotah is still smaller. In Nanjinaud, 21 *marakals* make one *kotah* and 8 *padis* make one *marakal*. These are the recognised standards of measure; but if we take the markets in the above localities, we find that no two places agree. There are 8 *padi marakals*, 7½ *padi marakals* and 7 *padi marakals*. What I have said of the *kotah* and *marakal* applies also to the *para* and *edangazhi*. The *para* differs more widely than the *kotah* as it is in use in a much larger portion of the country. The *edangazhi* of Trivandrum or *chala mudra* is 90 and odd cubic inches, *i. e.* it is supposed to contain 90 and odd cubic inches of water. Outside Trivandrum, the *edangazhi* is much less. By a Royal Proclamation of 1061, the standard for the *para* and *edangazhi* has been fixed, and it will be found in page 379 of the English Almanac for this year. The *edangazhi* is 80 cubic inches and the *para* 10 times as much. That Proclamation was issued along with the Revenue Settlement Proclamation, and it was, I believe, intended that in the Taluks where the settlement operations are completed, the standard *para* should be introduced. But I am not sure whether this has been done. In Trivandrum the old *edangazhi* of 90 and odd cubic inches is still in force. I think the standard fixed by the Royal Proclamation should be introduced. *Edangazhies* and *nazhis* should be fractional portions of the *para*. Coming to liquid measure, we find there is not so much difference. The *nazhi*, *edangazhi* and *para* are used for liquids also in those parts of the country where they are used for grain measure, but the smaller unit is the *thodum* or one-fourth of a *nazhi*. The liquid measures used in Nanjinaud are *padees* and for purposes of Government account they are the *chothanas* and *kodums*. This, too, varies in different parts.

Next there is the measure of length. The *kole* has been already fixed at the standard of 30 English inches. This was done by a Royal Proclamation about 15 years ago, and it continues to be the measure of land. There is also the *thennoo* which is four times a *kole*. But other measures of length have also to be considered, such as cloth measure and so forth, and even if new ones are not introduced, those in use will have to be legalized as the standards. For cloth measure, we cannot have the *kole*. Formerly, a cubit was the measure used for this purpose, but the English *yard* is now generally resorted to, and must, I think, be taken as the standard. We should have the *kole* and *thennoo* for lands, and the English *inch*, *foot* and *yard* for other purposes.

In regard to weights, I may say confusion cannot be greater than it is at present. In the Government accounts themselves, we have more than one standard. There is what is called the *Lundee* or *Dutch pound* equal to nearly 42 Tolas. All tobacco duty is charged on a candy of 600 Dutch pounds. But the Government custom-houses use the pound avoirdupois and cwts. for all transactions which take place there. Then again, the weights used in the Agrasala and other institutions are *palams*, *thulams* &c., no two of which are alike. All this leads to confusion.

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I trust the necessity for legislation on this subject need not be pressed on the Council further. The poor purchaser must be protected against the frauds which are committed upon him by the wily merchant, who, taking advantage of the diversities which prevail, tries to dupe him. There are loud complaints of such frauds and, although there is provision in the Penal Code for punishing the fraudulent merchant, that provision is practically a dead letter from want of a legally fixed standard, and recently I had to quash on appeal three convictions, because the Sirkar Vakil was not able to show a legal standard. In regard to the *Para* it may not, I think, be possible to introduce the new standard simultaneously throughout the country. In the settled Taluks the new *Para* may be introduced. In other Taluks, the existing measures should be examined and taken note of and standards kept in central offices. It will then be possible to succesfully prosecute persons who use false weights and measures.

With these observations, I request the permission of the Council to introduce a Bill to regulate weights and measures.

Permission was granted accordingly.

HINDU RELIGIOUS AND CHARITABLE ENDOWMENTS BILL.

Mr. Nagam Aiya—As it is not 15 days yet from the publication of the Bill in the Gazette, I beg the Council will suspend Rule 33, to enable me to introduce the Bill.

The Rule having been suspended, Mr. Nagam Aiya introduced the Bill and in doing so spoke as follows :—

"With your permission, Sir, I will offer a few remarks in introducing this Bill. My initial difficulty has been the absence of an authoritative piece of British legislation on the subject, which would not only have considerably lightened the labors of a member of this Council undertaking a similar measure here, but would have created in the minds of random critics a sense of respect and responsibility and thus obviated a deal of needless and reckless criticism. It will, I trust, be patent to the Council that the Bill has been the result of considerable labor, thought and consultation. The public have been taken into confidence and no pains have been spared to canvass their views or benefit by their local knowledge and experience; but nevertheless, I fear the Bill is not sufficiently immuned from the attacks of critics of sorts, coming from all points of the compass. There is nothing however strange in this. It is the common lot of those who are engaged in the refreshing work of putting things to rights, or as one who holds a foremost place amongst the original thinkers and word-painters of this century said : "If no other happiness is to be had, the mere war with Decomposition is a kind of happiness. But the war with the Lord of Decomposition, the old Dragon himself, St. George's war, with a princess to save and win, are none of you, my friends, proud enough to hope for any part in that battle."

One class of critics I can summarily dismiss from consideration, though unfortunately they cannot be included in the uneducated portion of our population. These are critics who have been favoring the public with their objections and remarks on the Bill several months before the Bill itself was framed and published. As their views are not founded on the provisions of the Bill, but on pre-conceived notions of what it might contain, no explanations can be given to them here, nor do they deserve any. But there is another class of critics, by far the largest portion of those whom the Bill will affect, who entertain entirely wrong notions of the object and scope of the measure, who fancy that this Bill is conceived in a spirit of opposition to their vested rights, and whom it is therefore our duty and interest to correct and conciliate. In the following remarks, I will endeavour to remove their misconceptions.

There is yet another class of critics, the vast majority of our population, who form the *cestui qui trust*, as it were, of these endowments and are directly interested in their welfare and benefited by their proper administration. They hail the measure with delight and have welcomed it as glad tidings of great joy. These good folks tell me that the Gods in the temples, enveloped so long in mist and gloom under the baneful influence of malevolent planets, are now approaching their day of

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